

Have you seen me?



Photo Courtesy of Paula E. Whitfield

Photo of adult lionfish (6 inches long)

Divers, Your help is needed!

'Lionfish' are native to the sub-tropical and tropical regions of the Indian and Pacific Ocean including the Red Sea. Since August 2000, lionfish have been reported every year in increasing numbers along the Atlantic Coast of the United States from Florida to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Juvenile lionfish have also been found off Long Island, New York and Bermuda (photo below). NOAA is interested in any information concerning the location of lionfish in Atlantic and Caribbean Waters.

Please report any lionfish sighting to Paula Whitfield at the NOAA Beaufort Laboratory, (252) 728-8714 or email paula.whitfield@noaa.gov. Video and photographs are encouraged. Any other information regarding the number of lionfish, depth, latitude and longitude, or behavioral observations such as feeding and courtship behavior are also welcome.

Habitat: Lionfish have been found in water depths from 85 to 260 ft on hard bottom, coral reefs and artificial substrate, sometimes found under ledges and hiding in crevices.

Identification: Lionfish have distinctive red, maroon, and white stripes; fleshy tentacles above eyes and below mouth; fan-like pectoral fins; long separated dorsal spines; dorsal spines 13; dorsal soft rays 10-11; anal spines 3; anal soft rays 6-7. An adult lionfish can grow as large as 18 inches while juveniles (see right) may be as small as 1 inch or less.



Photo Courtesy of John F. Morrissey

Special Precautions: **All of the spines on a lionfish are venomous!** This fish can give a painful, venomous sting with its dorsal, anal and pelvic spines. Please exercise extreme caution.

For more information and to print out additional flyers go to:
<http://shrimp.ccfhrb.noaa.gov/lionfish>

